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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9540
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0377
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 1354
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0331
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RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0756

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KINSHASA ALSO FOR BRAZZAVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/27/2116
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [GB](#)
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION PARTIES WALK OUT

REF: LIBREVILLE 0001

Classified By: Ambassador Barrie Walkley for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (U) The National Assembly members were sworn-in January 24 and turned to the day's agenda: electing the President of the National Assembly and also selecting members of the "Bureau," the entity that controls the operation of the Assembly. Guy Nzouba Ndama was, without controversy, re-elected as President of the National Assembly. However, when it came time to select the fourteen members who, together with Ndama, would make up the Bureau, the opposition party members accused the majority PDG party of acting without transparency and complained of being sidelined.

¶2. (U) Essentially, the complaints focused on the fact that in the last National Assembly the opposition parties had 5 seats in the Bureau (even though only 3 small opposition parties were represented in the Assembly, the two major opposition parties having boycotted the elections). This time -- with five opposition parties represented in the Assembly (including the two major opposition parties) and despite the fact that this time the opposition has three times the number of members it had in the last Assembly -- the opposition was being accorded only three seats in the Bureau. Unable to secure an increase in the number of seats, the opposition parties, en masse, walked out of the session.

¶3. (U) On January 25, the opposition parties held a press conference and explained their unified position. UPG leader Pierre Mamboundou called for a minimum of 5 seats for the opposition, with a preference for 6. The opposition parties promised that unless they get more seats, they will boycott the Bureau throughout the five year mandate of the current National Assembly. There is no indication, at least at this point, that they plan to boycott the National Assembly itself.

¶4. (U) During the January 24 session there was no other business but the swearing in, selection of the President and of the Bureau. The National Assembly formally opens on March ¶1.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Undoubtedly, this is a matter of principle for the opposition parties -- they wish to be taken seriously and see stronger representation in the Bureau as a means of forwarding their agenda. It is also, however, a matter of money: one of the Bureau seats taken away was that of the 3rd Vice-President, a position significant in controlling the Assembly's funds. The ruling PDG party won 83 of the 120 seats in the National Assembly; it is not surprising that the PDG wishes to control the Bureau. We anticipate that there

will be some compromise reached before the Assembly meets
March 1 and expect the opposition to seek President Bongo's
help in resolving the issue.

WALKLEY